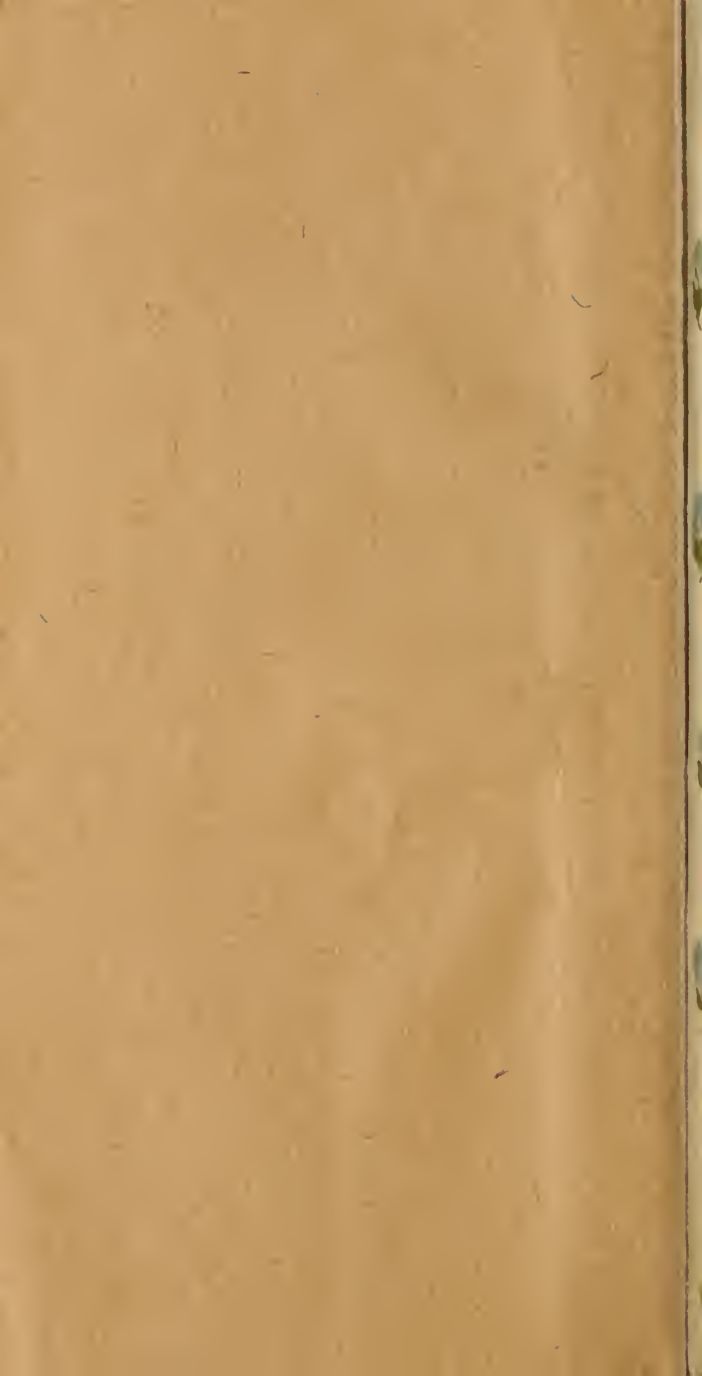


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RŪBĀIYĀT.
OF OMAR
KHAYYĀM.



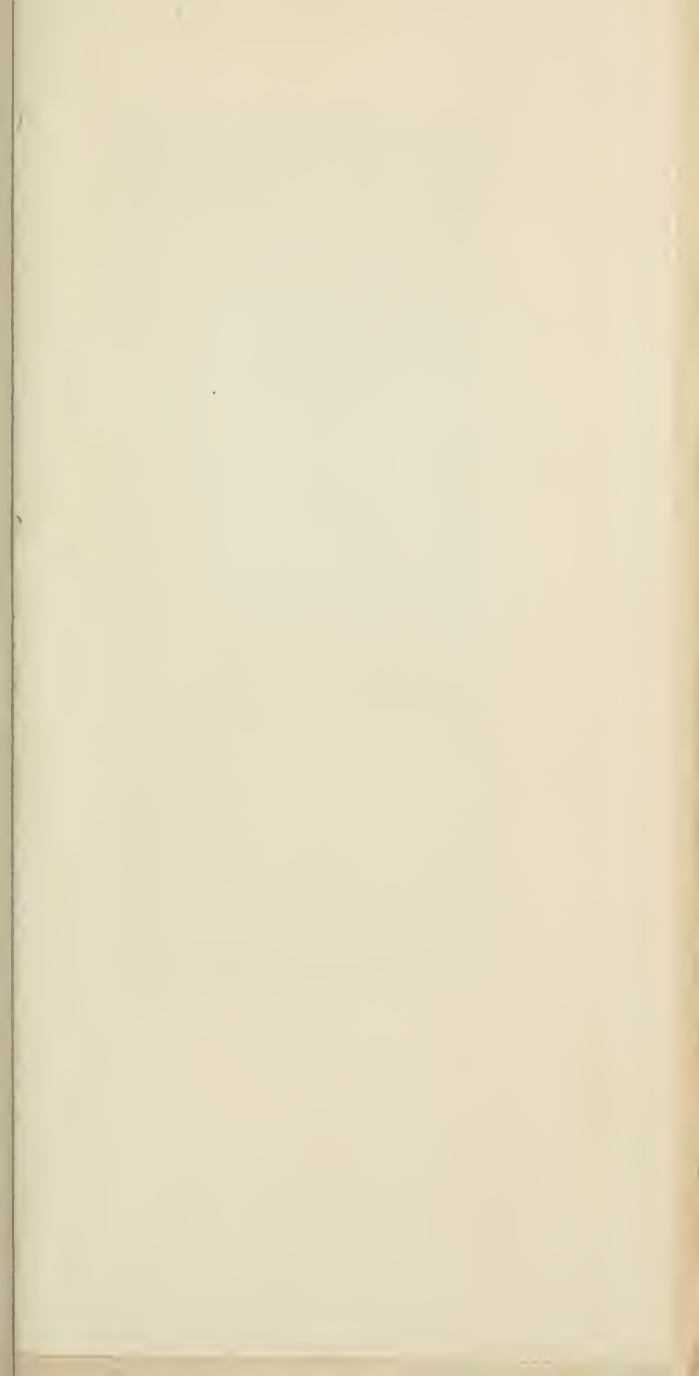




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OMAR KHAYYÁM

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‘ And Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.’

ILLUSTRATIONS

From Water-colour Drawings by
MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN

‘ And Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.’

Frontispiece

Old Khayyam.

Title-page

‘ Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argu-
ment

About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.’

Page sixteen

‘ While the Rose blows along the River
Brink,
With Old Khayyam the Ruby Vintage
drink :

And when the Angel with his darker
Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not
shrink.’

Page thirty-three

End Papers by ROBERT HOPE



THE
RUBÁIYÁT
OF
OMAR
KHAYYÁM

FITZ GERALD'S TRANSLATION

I

AWAKE! for Morning in the Bowl
of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the
Stars to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the
East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of
Light.

II

Dreaming when Dawn's Left
Hand was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern
cry,
'Awake, my Little ones, and fill
the Cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be
dry.'

III

And, as the Cock crew, those who
stood before
The Tavern shouted—‘Open then
the Door!

You know how little while we
have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no
more.’

IV

Now the New Year reviving old
Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude
retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF
MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the
Ground suspires.

V

Iram indeed is gone with all its
Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup
where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient
Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water
blows.

VI

And David's Lips are lock't; but
in divine
High-piping Pehlevi, with 'Wine!
Wine! Wine!
Red Wine!'—the Nightingale
cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's t' in-
carnadine.

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire
of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repent-
ance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a
little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the
Wing.

VIII

And look—a thousand Blossoms
with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd
into Clay:
And this first Summer Month
that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad
away.

IX

But come with old Khayyam and
 leave the Lot
 Of Kaikobad and Kaikhosru forgot:
 Let Rustum lay about him as he
 will,
 Or Hatim Tai cry Supper—heed
 them not.

X

With me along some Strip of
 Herbage strown
 That just divides the desert from
 the sown,
 Where name of Slave and Sul-
 tan scarce is known,
 And pity Sultan Mahmud on his
 Throne.

XI

Here with a Loaf of Bread be-
 neath the Bough,
 A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse
 —and Thou
 Beside me singing in the Wil-
 derness—
 And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XII

‘How sweet is mortal Sovranty’—
think some :

Others—‘How blest the Paradise
to come !’

Ah, take the Cash in hand and
waive the Rest ;

Oh, the brave Music of a distant
Drum !

XIII

Look to the Rose that blows about
us—‘Lo,

Laughing,’ she says, ‘into the
World I blow :

At once the silken Tassel of
my Purse

Tear, and its Treasure on the
Garden throw.’

XIV

The Worldly Hope men set their
Hearts upon

Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and
anon,

Like Snow upon the Desert’s
dusty Face

Lighting a little Hour or two—is
gone.

XV

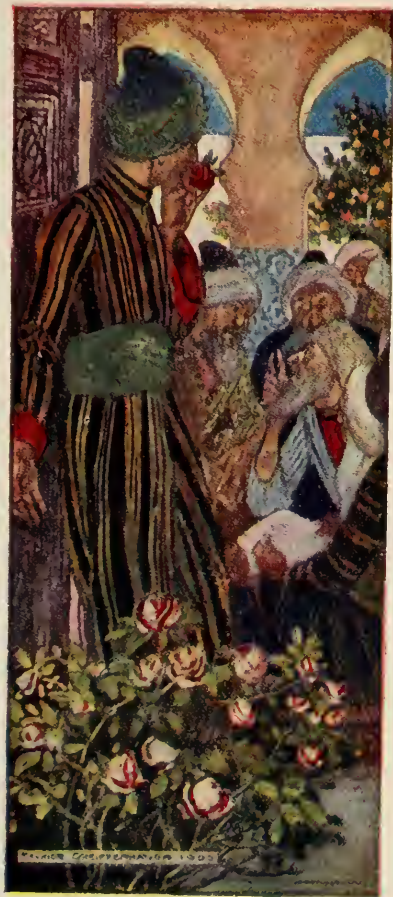
And those who husbanded the
 Golden Grain,
 And those who flung it to the
 Winds like Rain,
 Alike to no such aureate Earth
 are turn'd
 As, buried once, Men want dug
 up again.

XVI

Think, in this batter'd Caravan-
 serai
 Whose Doorways are alternate
 Night and Day,
 How Sultan after Sultan with
 his Pomp
 Abode his Hour or two, and went
 his way.

XVII

They say the Lion and the Lizard
 keep
 The Courts where Jamshyd gloried
 and drank deep ;
 And Bahram, that great Hunter
 —the Wild Ass
 Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies
 fast asleep.



XVIII

I sometimes think that never blows
 so red
 The Rose as where some buried
 Cæsar bled ;
 That every Hyacinth the Gar-
 den wears
 Dropt in its Lap from some once
 lovely Head.

XIX

And this delightful Herb whose
 tender Green
 Fledges the River's Lip on which
 we lean—
 Ah! lean upon it lightly! for
 who knows
 From what once lovely Lip it
 springs unseen!

XX

Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that
 clears
 To-DAY of past Regrets and future
 Fears—
 To-morrow?—Why, To-morrow
 I may be
 Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n
 Thousand Years.

XXI

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest
 and the best
 That Time and Fate of all their
 Vintage prest,
 Have drunk their Cup a Round
 or two before,
 And one by one crept silently to
 Rest.

XXII

And we, that now make merry
 in the Room
 They left, and Summer dresses in
 new Bloom,
 Ourselves must we beneath the
 Couch of Earth
 Descend, ourselves to make a
 Couch—for whom?

XXIII

Ah, make the most of what we yet
 may spend,
 Before we too into the Dust de-
 scend;
 Dust into Dust, and under
 Dust, to lie,
 Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer,
 and—sans End!

XXIV

Alike for those who for To-DAY
 prepare,
 And those that after a To-MORROW
 stare,
 A Muezzin from the Tower of
 Darkness cries
 'Fools! your Reward is neither
 Here nor There!'

XXV

Why, all the Saints and Sages who
 discuss'd
 Of the Two Worlds so learnedly,
 are thrust
 Like foolish Prophets forth;
 their Words to Scorn
 Are scatter'd, and their Mouths
 are stopt with Dust.

XXVI

Oh, come with old Khayyam, and
 leave the Wise
 To talk; one thing is certain, that
 Life flies;
 One thing is certain, and the
 Rest is Lies;
 The Flower that once has blown
 for ever dies.

‘ Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argu-
ment

About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.’

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly
 frequent
 Doctor and Saint, and heard great
 Argument
 About it and about: but ever-
 more
 Came out by the same Door as in
 I went.

XXVIII

With them the Seed of Wisdom
 did I sow,
 And with my own hand labour'd
 it to grow:
 And this was all the Harvest
 that I reap'd—
 'I came like Water, and like Wind
 I go.'

XXIX

Into this Universe, and why not
 knowing,
 Nor whence, like Water willy-nilly
 flowing:
 And out of it, as Wind along
 the Waste,
 I know not whither, willy-nilly
 blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither
 hurried whence?
 And, without asking, whither
 hurried hence!
 Another and another Cup to
 drown
 The Memory of this Impertin-
 ence!

XXXI

Up from Earth's Centre through
 the Seventh Gate
 I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn
 sate,
 And many Knots unravel'd by
 the Road;
 But not the Knot of Human Death
 and Fate.

XXXII

There was a Door to which I found
 no Key:
 There was a Veil past which I could
 not see:
 Some little Talk awhile of ME
 and THEE
 There seem'd—and then no more
 of THEE and ME.

XXXIII

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself
 I cried,
 Asking, 'What Lamp had Destiny
 to guide
 Her little Children stumbling in
 the Dark?'
 And—'A blind Understanding!'
 Heav'n replied.

XXXIV

Then to this earthen Bowl did I
 adjourn
 My Lip the secret Well of Life to
 learn:
 And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—
 'While you live
 Drink!—for once dead you never
 shall return.'

XXXV

I think the Vessel, that with fugi-
 tive
 Articulation answer'd, once did
 live,
 And merry-make; and the cold
 Lip I kiss'd
 How many Kisses might it take—
 and give!

XXXVI

For in the Market-place, one Dusk
 of Day,
 I watch'd the Potter thumping his
 wet Clay :
 And with its all obliterated
 Tongue
 It murmur'd — 'Gently, Brother,
 gently, pray !'

XXXVII

Ah, fill the Cup :—what boots it to
 repeat
 How Time is slipping underneath
 our Feet :
 Unborn TO-MORROW and dead
 YESTERDAY,
 Why fret about them if TO-DAY
 be sweet !

XXXVIII

One Moment in Annihilation's
 Waste,
 One Moment, of the Well of Life
 to taste—
 The Stars are setting and the
 Caravan
 Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—
 Oh, make haste !

How long, how long, in definite
 Pursuit
 Of This and That endeavour and
 dispute?
 Better be merry with the fruitful
 Grape
 Than sadden after none, or bitter,
 Fruit.

XL

You know, my Friends, how long
 since in my House
 For a new Marriage I did make
 Carouse:
 Divorced old barren Reason
 from my Bed,
 And took the Daughter of the Vine
 to Spouse.

XLI

For 'Is' and 'Is-NOT' though with
 Rule and Line,
 And 'UP-AND-DOWN' without, I
 could define,
 I yet in all I only cared to know,
 Was never deep in anything but—
 Wine.

XLII

And lately, by the Tavern Door
 agape,
 Came stealing through the Dusk
 an Angel Shape
 Bearing a Vessel on his Shoul-
 der; and
 He bid me taste of it; and 'twas
 —the Grape!

XLIII

The Grape that can with Logic
 absolute
 The Two-and-Seventy jarring
 Sects confute:
 The subtle Alchemist that in a
 Trice
 Life's leaden Metal into Gold trans-
 mute.

XLIV

The mighty Mahmud, the victori-
 ous Lord,
 That all the black and misbeliev-
 ing Horde
 Of Fears and Sorrows that infest
 the Soul
 Scatters and slays with his en-
 charmed Sword.

XLV

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and
 with me
 The Quarrel of the Universe let
 be :

And, in some corner of the Hub-
 bub coucht,
 Make Game of that which makes
 as much of Thee.

XLVI

For in and out, above, about, be-
 low,
 'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-
 show,
 Play'd in a Box whose Candle is
 the Sun,
 Round which we Phantom Figures
 come and go.

XLVII

And if the Wine you drink, the
 Lip you press,
 End in the Nothing all Things end
 in—Yes—
 Then fancy while Thou art,
 Thou art but what
 Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou
 shalt not be less.

XLVIII

While the Rose blows along the
 River Brink,
 With old Khayyam the Ruby Vin-
 tage drink :
 And when the Angel with his
 darker Draught
 Draws up to Thee—take that, and
 do not shrink.

XLIX

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights
 and Days
 Where Destiny with Men for
 Pieces plays :
 Hither and thither moves, and
 mates, and slays,
 And one by one back in the Closet
 lays.

L

The Ball no Question makes of
 Ayes and Noes,
 But Right or Left as strikes the
 Player goes ;
 And He that toss'd Thee down
 into the Field,
 He knows about it all—He knows
 —HE knows !

LI

The Moving Finger writes; and,
 having writ,
 Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor
 Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half
 a Line,
 Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word
 of it.

LII

And that inverted Bowl we call
 the Sky,
 Whereunder crawling coopt we
 live and die,
 Lift not thy hands to It for help
 —for It
 Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

LIII

With Earth's first Clay They did
 the last Man's knead,
 And then of the Last Harvest
 sow'd the Seed:
 Yea, the first Morning of Crea-
 tion wrote
 What the Last Dawn of Reckon-
 ing shall read.

LIV

I tell Thee this—When, starting
 from the Goal,
 Over the shoulders of the flaming
 Foal
 Of Heav'n Parwin and Mushtara
 they flung,
 In my predestin'd Plot of Dust
 and Soul

LV

The Vine had struck a Fibre;
 which about
 If clings my Being—let the Sufi
 flout;
 Of my Base Metal may be filed
 a Key,
 That shall unlock the Door he
 howls without.

LVI

And this I know: whether the one
 True Light,
 Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume
 me quite,
 One Glimpse of It within the
 Tavern caught
 Better than in the Temple lost out-
 right.

LVII

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall
 and with Gin
 Beset the Road I was to wander
 in,
 Thou wilt not with Predestina-
 tion round
 Enmesh me, and impute my Fall
 to Sin?

LVIII

Oh Thou, who Man of baser
 Earth didst make,
 And who with Eden didst devise
 the Snake;
 For all the Sin wherewith the
 Face of Man
 Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness
 give—and take!

* * * *

KÚZA-NÁMA

LIX

Listen again. One Evening at the
Close
Of Ramazan, ere the better Moon
arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood
alone
With the clay Population round in
Rows.

LX

And, strange to tell, among the
Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others
not :
And suddenly one more im-
patient cried—
'Who is the Potter, pray, and who
the Pot?'

LXI

Then said another—'Surely not in
vain
My substance from the common
Earth was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me
into Shape
Should stamp me back to common
Earth again.'



LXII

Another said—‘ Why, ne’er a
 peevish Boy,
 Would break the Bowl from which
 he drank in Joy :
 Shall He that made the Vessel
 in pure Love
 And Fancy, in an after Rage de-
 stroy ! ’

LXIII

None answer’d this ; but after
 Silence spake
 A Vessel of a more ungainly Make :
 ‘ They sneer at me for leaning
 all awry ;
 What ! did the Hand then of the
 Potter shake ? ’

LXIV

Said one—‘ Folks of a surly Tap-
 ster tell,
 And daub his Visage with the
 Smoke of Hell ;
 They talk of some strict Testing
 of us—Pish !
 He’s a Good Fellow, and ’twill all
 be well.’

LXV

Then said another with a long-
drawn Sigh,
'My Clay with long oblivion is
gone dry :
But, fill me with the old familiar
Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-
bye !'

LXVI

So while the Vessels one by one
were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all
were seeking :
And then they jogg'd each other,
'Brother, Brother !
Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-
knot a-creaking !'

* * * *

LXVII

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life
provide,
And wash my Body whence the
Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-
leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-
side.

LXVIII

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a
 Snare
 Of perfume shall fling up into the
 Air,
 As not a true Believer passing
 by
 But shall be overtaken unaware.

LXIX

Indeed the Idols I have loved so
 long
 Have done my Credit in Men's
 Eye much wrong:
 Have drown'd my Honour in a
 shallow Cup,
 And sold my Reputation for a Song.

LXX

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft be-
 fore
 I swore—but was I sober when I
 swore?
 And then and then came Spring,
 and Rose-in-hand
 My thread-bare Penitence a-pieces
 tore.

LXXI

And much as Wine has play'd the
 Infidel,
 And robb'd me of my Robe of
 Honour—well,
 I often wonder what the Vint-
 ners buy
 One-half so precious as the Goods
 they sell.

LXXII

Alas, that Spring should vanish
 with the Rose !
 That Youth's sweet-scented Manu-
 script should close !
 The Nightingale that in the
 Branches sang,
 Ah, whence, and whither flown
 again, who knows !

LXXIII

Ah Love ! could thou and I with
 Fate conspire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of
 Things entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits
 —and then
 Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's
 Desire ?

‘ While the Rose blows along the River
Brink,
With Old Khayyam the Ruby Vintage
drink :
And when the Angel with his darker
Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not
shrink.’

LXXIV

Ah, Moon of my Delight who
know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising
once again :
How oft hereafter rising shall
she look
Through this same Garden after
me—in vain !

LXXV

And when Thyself with shining
Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd
on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach
the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an
empty Glass !

TAMÁM SHUD

NOTE

OF information regarding the actual life of Omar Khayyám, the astronomer poet of Persia, we have practically none. He was born, it is said, about 1018, and died in 1123, at the age of one hundred and five.

The first English version of his quatrains, from which this is reprinted, was written by Fitz Gerald, and published in 1859, and, nine years later, reissued to a still unappreciative public, with the stanzas increased to one hundred and ten. In subsequent versions the number of verses was reduced to one hundred and one.

Edward Fitz Gerald, unrewarded by the gratitude of a now ever-widening circle of admirers of this Epicurean philosophical poem, died in 1883, leaving this little classic a monument to his genius.

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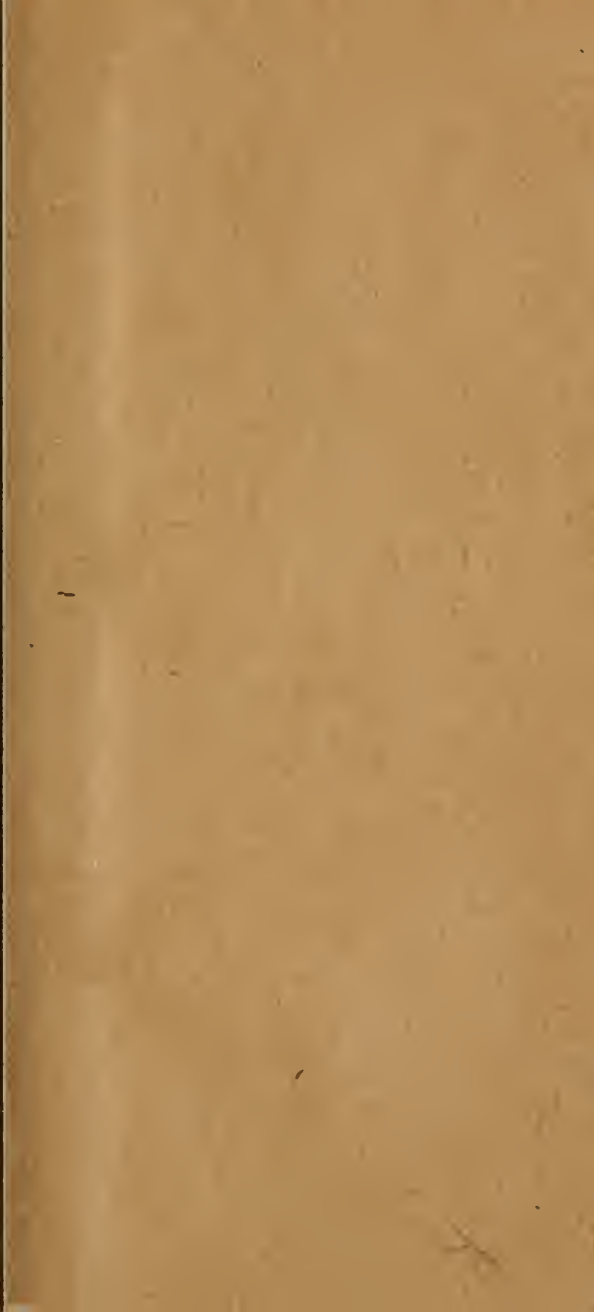
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